



THE WOLDS & VALE FEDERATION



Attendance Policy

Introduction

In order for all children to achieve their full potential they must be in school every day, on time and ready to learn. The Wolds and Vale Federation places a high value on punctual and regular attendance. Every child and family in the schools will be made aware of the importance of this through regular updates, the positive promotion of good attendance, rewards for good attendance and, where necessary, discussions with families about the need to improve attendance and punctuality.

The Department for Education has produced guidance for maintained schools and local authorities:
[Working Together to Improve School Attendance](#)

This policy is written with the above guidance in mind and underpins our school ethos to:

- Promote children's welfare and safeguarding
- Ensure every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Ensure pupils succeed whilst at school
- Ensure that pupils have access to the widest possible range of opportunities at school, and when they leave school.

At the Wolds and Vale Federation, we believe in developing good patterns of attendance and set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality for all pupils from the outset. We recognise the connections between attendance, attainment, safeguarding and wellbeing.

To create a culture of good attendance, we will:

- Give parents and carers details on attendance in our weekly newsletters
- Report to parents and carers annually on their child's attendance within the annual school report
- Contact parents and carers should their child's attendance fall below the school's target for attendance
- Celebrate excellent attendance by reporting class and individual successes
- Rewarding good attendance on a class and individual basis

Aims of the Policy to Promote Good Attendance

Our policy aims to raise and maintain levels of attendance by:

- Promoting a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued
- Raising awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality
- Ensuring that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently

Children have a right to experience a broad, balanced and differentiated curriculum; non-attendance deprives them of this opportunity. It is the aim of this policy that unauthorised absence should be 0% on a year-by-year basis and that authorised absences should be kept to a minimum. Whole school and individual monitoring will be in line with targets set by the Wolds and Vale Federation on an annual basis.

In order to improve the overall attendance of student/pupils in the schools we will:

- Make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the schools in the Federation
- Develop a framework which defines agreed roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks
- Implement a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data

- Implement a system of rewards for attendance
- Provide support, advice and guidance to parents and carers
- Ensure we have positive and consistent methods of communication about attendance matters with families and the schools in the Federation
- Work in partnership with supporting services and agencies and the Local Authority
- Recognise and meet the needs of the individual student/pupil when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence.

Persistent Absence Guidance from the Department for Education (2011) advises that if a child's attendance is below 90% he/she will be referred to as a 'Persistent Absentee'. The Federation will work closely with parents and carers, the local authority and other external agencies to improve persistent absenteeism. This may include the use of parenting contracts and Attendance Panels.

Responsibilities

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or through education otherwise than at a school.

Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means children must attend every day the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

Improving the attendance and therefore life chances of the children in the schools in the Federation, is the responsibility of parents/carers, the Federation, its schools and the child. Working together in partnership will ensure each child is most likely to achieve their full potential by ensuring their frequent and punctual attendance.

This policy reflects the expected practice in both schools within the Wolds and Vale Federation. The fair and consistent application of the policy is the responsibility of all staff. Both schools within the Federation will take the attendance register twice a day: at the start of each morning and once during the afternoon.

The schools will also notify the local authority if a student/pupil has irregular attendance or is absent continuously without authorisation.

Authorised and Unauthorised Absences

There are a series of codes defined by the Department of Education which are used to denote authorised and unauthorised absence.

It is the school's responsibility to ensure that the correct codes are recorded and that patterns in children's attendance are analysed. Parents and carers should be made aware that it is for Headteacher to decide whether an absence is to be authorised or unauthorised.

All reasons given for a child's absence are considered by the Headteacher.

As examples, absence from school may be authorised if it is for the following reasons:

- genuine illness

- unavoidable medical/dental appointments
- days of religious observance
- exceptional family circumstances, such as bereavement A

Absence from school will not be authorised for:

- shopping
- birthdays
- minding the house
- caring for brothers/sisters/relatives
- parent/carer illness
- sibling illness
- arrivals after a specific time in the morning – please see the guidance below.

The Headteacher will only authorise leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. Each application will be treated on an individual basis. Advice on what constitutes exceptional circumstances suggests situations such as children of service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking holidays outside the term time, or families who need to spend time together following a crisis.

Parents and carers are asked to ensure that they make any medical appointments for their child outside of the school day.

If the Headteacher grants a leave request, it will be for him or her to determine the length of time that any child can be away from school. As a norm, leave is unlikely, however, to be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

Parents and carers should put in writing all requests for a child’s absence from school for any purpose. This should be sent to the school marked well in advance of any request for leave of absence during term time. Circumstances such as previous attendance, academic achievement, family circumstances and the time of year, will be taken into account. If your child has an older sibling, contact will also be made with local secondary schools so that a joint decision can be made.

Should a leave of absence request not be authorised and a child is still taken out of school, a ‘Fixed Penalty Notice’ could be issued. Fixed Penalty Notice In certain circumstances parents can be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice where they take a holiday in term time which is not authorised by the Headteacher.

A Fixed Penalty Notice can require a parent to pay a sum of either £60 or £120. Each parent can be issued with a notice for each child so two parents with two children can potentially be issued with four notices.

See Appendix A – The Wolds and Vale Attendance Protocol

Punctuality

Poor punctuality is not acceptable and can contribute to further absence. Good time-keeping is a vital life skill which will help children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world.

Pupils who arrive late disrupt lessons and, if a child misses the start of the day, can feel unsettled and embarrassed, miss vital work and/or important messages or instructions from the teacher.

The School Day:

- The school gates open and registers open at 8.35am
- The school gates close, registers close and school begins at 8.45am
- The school day ends at 3.15pm

How we manage lateness:

- Children arriving between 8.45-9.15am will be asked to enter school by the main door and will be allocated a “L” - Late mark on the register. A reason for being late will also be required and recorded.
- Lateness and “L” marks will be analysed as part of the Attendance Protocol each half term. **See Appendix A – the Wolds and Vale Federation Attendance Protocol.**
- Children arriving after 9.15am will receive a “U” mark. This will be classed as an Unauthorised absence although the child is in school. These marks will affect attendance levels and analysed as part of the Attendance Protocol each half term. **See Appendix A – the Wolds and Vale Federation Attendance Protocol.**
- The school may contact parents or carers regarding lateness if it becomes a persistent problem.
- From time to time a member of school staff will undertake a “Late Gate” check, greeting late arrivals at the main entrance to the school.

Parents of children who are persistently late may be called into a meeting with the Headteacher to discuss punctuality if it is becoming a persistent problem.

Understanding Barriers to Attendance

Whilst any child occasionally has time off school due to illness, it is acknowledged that they can become reluctant to attend school. Any barriers preventing regular attendance can be resolved between the school, the parents and the child. The Attendance Lead will meet with and work with the family to understand the root problem and provide any necessary support. Outside agencies and support may be sought to help with this, such as the School Nurse, Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing support services, a Child and Family Support Worker or the relevant Local Authority team/s. Where outside agencies are supporting the family, a Team Around the Family meeting (TAF) may be convened to consider what is working well and what needs to improve. An individualised early help plan will be agreed and subsequently reviewed.

Some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long-term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities, or other vulnerabilities. High expectations of attendance remain however, and the Attendance Lead will work with families and pupils to improve attendance whilst being mindful of the additional barriers faced. Reasonable adjustments can be made as well as additional support from external partners if appropriate.

Support and Guidance Available to those with Persistent Absence and Poor Punctuality.

Where persistent absence occurs, or where persistent lateness or poor attendance is identified through the monitoring processes, the Attendance Lead will contact the family. Support and assistance will be offered to families who are experiencing difficulties in getting their children to school. This will be via, appointments in school, guidance and advice on attendance or contact with other agencies. In some cases, families will be offered an Action Plan for attendance.

In more severe cases, such as 'Persistent Absence', staff will contact the Local Authority's Early Help Service. Together they will work with the family to offer further support and guidance. If attendance continues to be poor at this point steps may be taken, as dictated by law, which may result in prosecution for non-attendance. The Wolds and Vale Federation has a duty to refer regular absence (authorised and unauthorised) to the relevant local authority.

This may include any evidence to show how schools in the Federation have supported the student/pupil and parent to improve attendance. It is for each local authority to judge each referral on its own merits and make a decision on the next probable course of action.

Further Information for Parents and Carers

Parents and Carers are encouraged to read the [Working Together to Improve School Attendance](#) document for more information around attendance and absence.

Appendix A – Wolds and Vale Federation Attendance Protocol

The name and contact details of the Senior Leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in our Federation is:

Mrs Jo Mould (Interim Headteacher)
Email: admin@woldsandvalefederation.co.uk

The name and contact details of the school staff member pupils and parents should contact about attendance on a day-to-day basis are:

Sherburn: Mrs Jo Harber
Email: admin@woldsandvalefederation.co.uk
Telephone: 01944 710282

Luttons: Mrs Vicki Leeson
Email: admin@woldsandvalefederation.co.uk
Telephone: 01944 738232

Daily Protocol:

When a child is absent from school the parent must follow these procedures:

- Contact the school on the first day of absence before 9.15am. The school has an answer phone available to leave a message or you may call personally and speak to the office staff after 8.30am.
- Contact the school on every further day of absence, again before 9.15am.
- Ensure that your child returns to school as soon as possible and you provide any medical evidence of requested to support the absence
- If parents and carers offer a vague reason for absence eg: feeling unwell or under the weather, staff will use professional curiosity and ask politely for more information about symptoms of illness.
- If parents say that their child is absent for a low-level reason – eg: feeling tired, has a slight headache, a slight cold etc , staff will encourage parents and carers to administer paracetamol and bring their child into school with the reassurance that they will be carefully monitored by staff and parents and carers called if needed to collect them.

If your child is absent, and we have not heard from parents or carers we will:

- Telephone or send a message via DoJo on the first and every subsequent day of absence.
- If we are unable to make contact with parents by phone or there is no response to a DoJo message, we will call the other emergency contact numbers provided.
- If no contact has been made via the emergency telephone contacts, two members of staff will carry out a pavement visit in the interest of safeguarding.
 - Staff will ask the parents to see the child and ask for reasons why the child is not in school.
 - If no sufficient reason is given or the child is not seen, on return to school, staff will contact Social Services.
 - If no contact is made at the house, the police will be informed and a welfare check requested.

- A referral will be made to the Local Authority if no contact has been made with parents or carers by the 10th day of absence (or sooner if deemed appropriate) at which point the child will be considered to be “missing from education”.

For each day of a child’s absence, notes will be recorded on the school Safeguarding system – CPOMS and on the MIS system, Scholar Pack. This will give a reason for absence and is logged to help with the tracking of absence and forms part of our safeguarding procedures.

Weekly Protocol:

Monitoring:

- Weekly attendance for each school is logged on the Weekly Attendance Log each Friday afternoon
- Watch List of Persistent Absentees is updated with individual attendance. These levels will be RAG rated each week. Where attendance drops from the previous week, the Attendance Lead will call parents to discuss possible support strategies.
- Attendance will be shared with parents and carers each week via the weekly newsletter for each school.

Rewards:

- Class with the highest attendance each week will be allowed an extra 5 minutes onto a playtime the following week – the day to be decided by the class teacher.
- Children with 100% attendance each week will receive a named ticket to place in the “In It To Win It” bag. A ticket will be pulled out during Friday assembly each week with the winner receiving a certificate.

Half Termly Protocol:

Monitoring:

- Attendance Trawl in the penultimate week of each half term – all children at both schools.
- Federation target is 97% attendance.
- Attendance of all children monitored and RAG rated:
 - 100% = Green
 - 99-97% = Green
 - 91-96% = Yellow
 - 90% and below = Pink
- Children with Yellow and Pink attendance will be individually scrutinised.
- Graduated response letters sent to parents – depending on reasons for absence and frequency of absence.
- Parents and carers of children with attendance below 90% will receive an invitation to meet with the Attendance Lead and discuss and sign an Action Plan agreeing to certain actions to improve attendance. The Action Plan will include Pupil Voice.
- Completion of Persistent Absentee analysis – summary of reasons and analysis for possible support for families.
- Watch List of Persistent Absentees updated and weekly attendance RAG rated.
- Half Termly Class Attendance Reports completed for all class teacher to share Wave 1 messages around attendance with children and families.

Rewards:

- Class with the highest attendance rate for the half term receives a small class treat – eg: an extra playtime
- Children with 100% attendance for the half term receive a named ticket to be placed in the “Half Term In It To Win It Box”. A raffle ticket will be drawn out in assembly on the last Friday of half term with the winner receiving a certificate and a small prize.

Termly/End of Year:**Monitoring:**

- As per half term
- End of Year data collated

Information to Parents:

- September Attendance Letter – sets out expectations for the year
- Spring and Summer Term letters – reminders of protocols and expectations with shared data
- Reminders about attendance and punctuality in weekly newsletters as a reminder.
- Early Years – Attendance messages shared at new parents meeting (Summer 2)
- Attendance Agreement to sign and return to school

Rewards:

- Highest Class Attendance for the Year – special class treat eg: movie and popcorn/class picnic
- Highest Class Attendance for the Term – class treat – eg: hot chocolate
- Highest Class Attendance for the Half Term – extra playtime
- Individual Highest Attendance for the Year – certificate and prize
- Individual Highest Attendance for the Term – certificate and seasonal prize
- Individual Attendance for the Half Term – certificate and small prize.